

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 L-03 H-01 NSC-05 STR-07 PA-01
AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7529

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELTN BDIS IR
SUBJ: GENERAL MOTORS

REF: STATE 074863

1. EMBASSY UNABLE TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTIVE GUIDANCE ON PROPOSAL FOR GM PRESIDENT TO MEET WITH SHAH BECAUSE WE FRANKLY HAVE UNTIL NOW BEEN UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND OR EXPLAIN IRANIAN GAME PLAN. IT IS CLEAR THAT IRANIANS HAVE BEEN MOST DISSATISFIED WITH PAST GM PERFORMANCE UNDER ITS CONTRACT AND LOCAL GM REPRESENTATIVE HAS PRIVATELY ADMITTED TO US THAT THEIR DISSATISFACTION HAS BEEN JUSTIFIED. HOWEVER, THEIR ANTICIPATED PURPOSE IN PURSUING THE COURSE THEY HAVE TAKEN IS NOT CLEAR.

2. ON THE FACE OF IT, AN ACTION WHICH DEPOSES THE GM BOARD MEMBERS AND REPLACES THE GM MANAGING DIRECTOR (NO MATTER WHAT THE LEGAL PREMISES MAY BE) SEEMS DESIGNED TO EXTRUDE GM FROM IRAN. IRANIAN PARTNERS COULD HARDLY EXPECT GM PASSIVELY TO CONTINUE ITS PREVIOUS ASSOCIATIONS UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. IF HOWEVER, THE ACTION IS MERELY AN IRANIAN PLOY TO GET HIGH LEVEL GM ATTENTION, AND IF THIS IS DIRECTED
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FROM THE TOP, THE IT SEEMS PLAUSIBLE THAT ITS PURPOSE IS TO CAUSE GM TO RENEGOTIATE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN.

3. IF LATTER IS THE CASE, WE WOULD AGREE THAT VISIT BY ESTES TO THE SHAH IS IN ORDER. WE SHARE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW THAT SUCH VISIT WOULD BE BEST ARRANGED THROUGH ZAHEDI.

4. OUR EFFORT TO CALIRFY LOCAL SITUATION IS HANDICAPPED BY NOW RUZ HOLIDAYS, DURING WHICH ALL IMPORTANT OFFICIALS ARE OUT OF TOWN. HOWEVER, AMBASSADOR HAS ASKED FOR APPOINTMENT WITH INDUSTRIES IMINISTER REZA AMIN AT FIRST OPPORTUNITY AND WILL AT THAT TIME CANDIDLY ASK FOR AN EXPLANATION OF IRANIAN TACTICS. IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT THIS INQUIRY WILL FIND ITS WAY RAPIDLY TO KISH ISLAND, WHERE SHAH IS VACATIONING, AND WE SHOULD HAVE INDICATIVE REACTION PRIOR TO EARLY APRIL PERIOD WHEN ESTES PROPOSES VISIT IRAN.

5. IN MEANTIME, DEPT MAY WISH SEEK EXPLANATION OF IRANIAN MOTIVES FROM CYRUS GHANI, WHO CURRENTLY IN NEW YORK, IN ORDER DETERMINE HIS RATIONALE FOR PROPOSING ESTES VISIT WITH SHAH.
SULLIVAN

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